

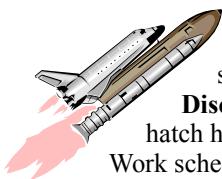


countdown

January 6, 2009

Vol. 14, No. 01

Discovery to roll to VAB Wednesday



◆ **Shuttle Update:**

Tile work on space shuttle

Discovery's crew module hatch has been completed.

Work scheduled this week includes Orbiter Transportation System operations. Rollover to the VAB is scheduled for Wednesday morning in preparation for the targeted Feb. 12 launch to the International Space Station.

◆ **Constellation Update:** The first major flight hardware pieces of the Ares I-X rocket started arriving in Florida in November for the inaugural test flight of the agency's next-generation launch system. The Ares I-X upper stage simulator and the forward skirt are being prepared for the targeted July 11, 2009 test flight.

During the next few months, all of the additional hardware needed to complete the test vehicle will be delivered to KSC, beginning with a piece that simulates a fifth segment for the four-segment solid rocket booster and concluding with delivery of the complete motor set in January.

KSC awarded a contract for the construction of the Ares I mobile launcher platform for the Constellation Program. The new platform will be used in the assembly, testing and servicing of Ares I at existing KSC facilities. The space shuttle mobile launcher platform that will be used for Discovery's targeted February mission will be turned over to the Constellation Program and modified for the Ares I-X test flight.

■ **PM Challenge 2009 Registration Now Open!** Registration is now open for NASA PM Challenge 2009 Feb. 24-25. You can register at: <http://pmchallenge.gsfc.nasa.gov/registration2009.htm>. The PM Challenge speaker schedule is posted at: <http://pmchallenge.gsfc.nasa.gov/program.htm>.

The PM Challenge also invites internal NASA organizations to exhibit this year. Check out the PM Challenge Web site at:

<http://pmchallenge.gsfc.nasa.gov>. For more information, please contact JoAnn Carter at JoAnn.M.Carter@nasa.gov.

■ **NASA News Update** — NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, or LRO, has successfully completed thermal vacuum testing, which simulates the extreme hot, cold and airless conditions of space LRO will experience after launch. This milestone concludes the spacecraft's environmental test program at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md.

The LRO will carry seven instruments to provide scientists with detailed maps of the lunar surface and increase understanding of the moon's topography, lighting conditions, mineralogical composition and natural resources. Data returned to Earth from the LRO will be used to select safe landing sites, determine locations for future outposts and help mitigate radiation dangers to astronauts.

The spacecraft will spend at least a year in a low, polar orbit approximately 30 miles above the lunar surface.

KSC to get delivery of Ares I-X hardware in early 2009

■ **EAP Luncheon Lecture Series Kicks Off Today** — "Coping With a Difficult Co-Worker" is the topic of the first 2009 Employee Assistance Program Luncheon Lecture Series beginning at noon in the OHF Library. For information, please contact Marion Ruffing at 861-8647.

■ **NASA Science Update** — NASA researchers are presenting new findings on a wide range of astrophysics topics during the 213th American Astronomical Society meeting this week in California.

News briefings held during the meeting feature the latest results from NASA missions. Monday's sessions included the topics "NASA Scientists Detect Hydrocarbon In Cold Dust Between Stars" and results from NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope, including new observations of shredded asteroids around dead stars and evidence for rapidly forming planets.

Scheduled today are briefings of findings by the Chandra X-ray Observatory and the Swift Gamma-Ray Burst Explorer observatory and Keck I Telescope.

■ **STS-126 Crew Return Briefing** — Stop by the O&C Mission Briefing Room from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Jan. 14 to give the STS-126 crew a warm "welcome back to KSC" as they share their experiences of the November mission.

Countdown is published every Tuesday & Thursday for NASA KSC employees. Deadlines are 9 a.m. Mondays & Wednesdays. E-mail news to anita.l.barrett@nasa.gov. For questions or information, e-mail or call 867-2815. You can also find PDF editions of *Countdown* on the Web at: http://www.nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/countdown/countdown_toc.html.